



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development  
Office of the State Director Florida/USVI  
P.O. Box 147010, Gainesville, FL 32614 . Email: [ellen.boukari@fl.usda.gov](mailto:ellen.boukari@fl.usda.gov)  
Web: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/fl/](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/fl/)

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Contact Ellen Boukari (352) 338-3414

## **USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS PURCHASE OF LIVESTOCK AUCTION FACILITY FOR USE BY TRI-STATE CATTLEMEN'S COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.**

MARIANNA, FL, July 1, 2004 — The area's only livestock auction facility will soon be under new ownership. The Jackson County Development Council (JCDC), with funding from USDA Rural Development, has plans to purchase the former Tindel Livestock Auction Market in Graceville.

At a special ceremony today at the Jackson County Ag Office Complex in Marianna, FL, Rural Development Florida State Director Charles W. Clemons, Sr., signed over a \$336,000 ceremonial check to the Jackson County Development Council, Inc. Funded through a USDA Rural Development Rural Business Enterprise Grant, the facility purchase will support economic development in the area that will assist small businesses.

The facility will be leased to the Tri-State Cattlemen's Association Cooperative, Inc., ensuring that the cattle auction will remain in operation, saving 15 to 20 part-time jobs as well as assisting an estimated 200 small businesses/members. The cattle auction facility will serve cattlemen in the Panhandle region of Florida from Escambia County in the west, eastward to Madison County. Because of its proximity to area farmers, Tri-State Cattlemen's Cooperative Association will enable more small/disadvantaged farmers to actively participate in learning new farming techniques and sharpen their business skills.

During today's ceremony, State Director Clemons said, "Rural Development is proud to be a partner with the Jackson County Development Council and the Tri-State Cattlemen's Cooperative Association. The purchase of this facility will strengthen our farms and help our farmers and ranchers meet the challenges of a changing agricultural environment."

USDA Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities and is the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers financial and technical assistance through Rural Housing Programs, Rural Business-Cooperative Programs and Rural Utilities Programs. Further information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by contacting any USDA Service Center or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/fl>

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